



# INFORMATION SHEET

## Parent Information Network



### Preschool Delays: Moderate, Severe, and Speech/Language

#### What is a Preschool Delay?

A preschool child is one ". . . who is at least three years of age but who has not reached the required age for kindergarten. . ." (five by September 1), according to Arizona Revised Statutes (ARS) §15-761(23).

ARS §15-761(24) defines a preschool moderate delay as ". . . performance by a preschool child on a norm-referenced test that measures at least one and one-half, but not more than three, standard deviations below the mean for children of the same chronological age in two or more of the following areas:

- (a) Cognitive development.
- (b) Physical development.
- (c) Communication development.
- (d) Social or emotional development.
- (e) Adaptive development."

The results of the tests must be supported by information from a comprehensive developmental assessment and from parental input.

According to ARS §15-761(25), a severe delay is defined as ". . . performance by a preschool child on a norm-referenced test that measures more than three standard deviations below the mean for children of the same chronological age in one or more . . ." of the areas listed in (a)-(e) above.

A preschool speech/language delay means ". . . performance by a preschool child on a norm-referenced language test that measures at least one and one-half standard deviations below the mean for children of the same chronological age or whose speech, out of context, is unintelligible to a listener who is unfamiliar with the child . . ." [ARS §15-761(26)]. Eligibility under this category is only appropriate when a child meets evaluation criteria and is not eligible for services under other preschool categories.

A standard deviation is a unit used to measure the amount by which a particular score differs from the

average (mean) of all scores in the sample. Different tests have different standard deviations.

#### How Common are Preschool Delays?

In the 2004-05 school year, 8,921 Arizona students were classified as having preschool delays and received special education services. This number represents .85% of the 1,053,506 children enrolled in Arizona public schools as of October 1, 2004 and accounts for 7.44% of the total special education population. The total number of students with preschool delays does not include the 300 preschool aged children who have hearing and vision impairments.

#### What Effect Do Preschool Delays Have on a Child?

Each child with a preschool delay has a unique combination of abilities and disabilities. Skills that most children acquire in the first five years of life need to be specially taught to children with a combination of deficits. A program which helps improve thinking, language, movement, self-help, play, and social skills is important for development of a preschool child's potential. As with all students, appropriate placement in the least restrictive environment is essential.

With advances in research and technology, especially assistive technology, children with disabilities can achieve at levels not previously thought possible. Assistive technology examples are: computer assisted communication, powered mobility, fixed and adjustable back supports, magnification aids, amplification devices, and specially designed switches.

As preschool children make the transition to kindergarten, the preschool category in which they were served is reviewed. Eligibility criteria for students, ages 5-21, is used to determine which disability classification for special education in ARS §15-761 is appropriate.

## References

Heward, W.L. (2006). *Exceptional children: An introduction to special education*. (8<sup>th</sup> ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.

### Books for Adults

Batshaw, M.L. (2002). *Children with disabilities*. (5<sup>th</sup> ed.). Baltimore, MD: Brookes Publishing.

Cavallaro, C.C. & Haney, M. (1999). *Preschool inclusion*. Baltimore, MD: Brookes Publishing.

Miller, N.B. & Sammons, C.C. (1999). *Everybody's different: Understanding and changing our reactions to disabilities*. Baltimore, MD: Brookes Publishing.

National Information Center for Children and Youth with Disabilities. (2003). *Parenting a child with special needs: A guide to reading and resources*. (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). Washington, DC: Author.

Norlin, J.W. (ed.). (2003). *Special education dictionary*. Arlington, VA: LRP Publications.

### Books for Children

DeLoach, K. (2004). *Daniel's world: A book about children with disabilities*. [www.threemoonsmedia.com](http://www.threemoonsmedia.com)

Gehret, J. (1996). *Don't give-up kid & learning differences*. Fairport, NY: Verbal Images Press.

Hanson, M.J. & Beckman, P. (ed.). (2001). *Me, too!* (A 6-booklet series on Transition to Preschool). Baltimore, MD: Brookes Publishing.

Powell, T. & Gallagher, P.A. (2005). *Brothers and sisters: A special part of exceptional families*. (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Baltimore, MD: Brookes Publishing.

Saunders, K. (2000). *Happy ever afters: A storybook guide to teaching children about disability*. Sterling, VA: Stylus Publishing, LLC.

## Organizations/Hotlines/Web Sites

Arizona Department of Education, Exceptional Student Services, 1535 W. Jefferson, Phoenix, AZ 85007  
Parent Information Network, 602-542-3852  
800-352-4558, [www.ade.az.gov/ess/pinspals](http://www.ade.az.gov/ess/pinspals)  
Preschool Special Education, 602-542-2727,  
800-352-4558, [www.ade.az.gov/earlychildhood](http://www.ade.az.gov/earlychildhood)

Arizona Speech-Language-Hearing Association, 12256 N. 26<sup>th</sup> Pl., Phoenix, AZ 85032, 602-354-8062,  
800-705-7510, [www.arsha.org](http://www.arsha.org)

Children's Information Center, Arizona Department of Health Services, 800-232-1676

Council for Exceptional Children, Early Childhood Division, 1110 Glebe Rd., Ste. 300, Arlington, VA 22201-5704, Toll Free 888-232-7733  
[www.cec.sped.org](http://www.cec.sped.org)

Enhancing Arizona's Parent Networks (EAPN)  
[www.ade.az.gov/ess/eapn](http://www.ade.az.gov/ess/eapn)

Easter Seal Society of Arizona  
[www.az.easterseals.org](http://www.az.easterseals.org)  
2015 S. Cottonwood Dr., Tempe, AZ 85282,  
480-222-4100  
7634 N. LaCholla Blvd., Tucson, AZ 85741,  
520-745-5222  
Yuma, AZ 928-920-2212

Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities, 3839 N. Third St., Ste. 306, Phoenix, AZ 85012, 602-277-4986, TDD 602-277-4949, Toll Free 866-771-9378  
[www.de.state.az.us/gcdd](http://www.de.state.az.us/gcdd)

National Dissemination Center for Children with Disabilities, P.O. Box 1492, Washington, DC 20013-1492, 800-695-0285, [www.nichcy.org](http://www.nichcy.org)

Pilot Parents of Southern Arizona, 2600 N. Wyatt Dr., Tucson, AZ 85712, 520-324-3150  
[www.pilotparents.org](http://www.pilotparents.org)

Raising Special Kids, 2400 N. Central Ave., Ste. 200, Phoenix, AZ 85004, 602-242-4366, 800-237-3007  
[www.raisingpecialkids.org](http://www.raisingpecialkids.org)

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